

THE 2  
LAW OF LOMBARDY;

A  
TRAGEDY:

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

WRITTEN BY

K  
ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF BRAGANZA.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY R. MARCHBANK,  
FOR THE COMPANY OF BOOKSELLERS.

MDCCLXXIX.

THE  
LAW OF LOMBARDY

A  
TREATISE

THE  
ROYAL



DURRY LANE

WRITTEN BY

ROBERT JEFFERSON, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF DRAGANA

DUBLIN

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FOR THE COMPANY OF BOOKSELLERS

MCDONALD



TO THE  
K I N G.

S I R,

**Y**OUR Majesty having graciously permitted me to prefix your royal name to this tragedy, has impressed me with so deep a sense of the honour, that I despair of finding terms sufficient to express my acknowledgments.

Tho' the public, which is seldom disposed to receive favourably, performances destitute of merit, has been pleased to give this a very indulgent reception, I must still regret its imperfections, when I consider that it may for a moment become the object of your Majesty's attention. Having omitted nothing in my power to render it not entirely unworthy of such an exalted patronage, I can't forbear to flatter myself that it may raise in the breast of your Majesty those emotions which well imagined distress never fails to excite in the noblest natures; but at the same time I more anxiously wish, that no other uneasiness but from such fictitious sorrow may ever approach you; and that the greatest and most amiable sovereign in Europe, may be also for ever distinguished as the most prosperous and happy. I am,

S I R,

Your Majesty's

most dutiful subject,

and most obliged,

humble servant,

ROBERT JEPHSON:

THE  
I  
K  
G.

81 R.

[illegible]

ROBERT T. JENNISON  
and most obliged,  
Respectfully,  
Robert T. Jennison

TO THE  
AUTHOR OF BRAGANZA,  
ON HIS  
NEW TRAGEDY  
OF THE  
LAW OF LOMBARDY.

WITH joy I see the drooping stage revive,  
Again by thee its ancient glories live;  
See the bald wing of towering fancy soar  
Where Avon's Swan plow'd the bright tracks before;  
Far, far beneath let humbler pinions sweep,  
Skim the low plain, or brush the level deep.  
As tuneful strings obedient to command,  
Responsive sound beneath the master's hand,  
Unable to resist the strong control,  
So vibrates to thy strains the according soul;  
In thy rich mine no scanty veins are found,  
That faintly flash thro' miles of meagre ground;  
That here and there a glimmering lustre boasts,  
Shine on the surface, and at once are lost;  
But bright and full the inestimable ore  
Gives much, and giving, makes the promise more;  
That pining poets may with envy see  
Thy stores abound to superfluity,  
Whose smallest portion mingled with their dross  
Might make them rich, and thou not feel the loss;  
I read with rapture (doubtful to prefer)  
Thy skill in passion, or in character,  
While in each artful scene with varied tone,  
Each breathes a soul peculiarly its own;  
We need no margin index of the name  
To own the villain's guile, or hero's flame;  
Thy figures too have such a feeling art,  
They seem the genuine language of the heart,

Unsought methinks in their due place they fall,  
 Prompt to thy wish, and wait not for thy call;  
 No purple patch with ostentation spread,  
 But shames the meanness of the neighbouring shred,  
 Diffus'd o'er all the vivid colours shine,  
 Beam from the whole, and glow with warmth divine.  
 So subtly next your fable you contrive  
 Each new discovery keeps suspense alive,  
 Eager we press to have no part conceal'd,  
 And pant for what's unknown by what's reveal'd:  
 Thus cunning beauty its pursuers warms  
 By folds which half display, half hide its charms.  
 O favourite of the nine, whose magic power  
 Can fill the vacant, charm the studious hour!  
 Thanks for the balm thy healing numbers bring  
 To soothe the smart of passion's fiery sting;  
 Caught by the spells thy art diffuses round,  
 Anguish and care awhile forbear to wound,  
 The soul beguil'd forgets its real pain,  
 To melt in pleasing grief at wots you feign.  
 Yet tho' true genius shall confess thy flame,  
 And time enrol thee 'midst the heirs of fame,  
 Envy again shall wear her scornful smile,  
 And call her gnawing tooth the critic's file;  
 Coxcombs to thee their enmity declare,  
 And dunces wage interminable war:  
 By railing strive to pull thy genius down  
 To the low groveling level of their own,  
 Or \* Tartar-like by whom a hero dies,  
 Hope to usurp thy vanish'd qualities:  
 Alas! her better art (cou'd envy learn,  
 Cou'd heady dulness its own ends discern)  
 Wou'd be to own the wonder of thy lays,  
 And strains they cannot emulate, to praise.  
 Then this just tribute shou'd their truth requite;  
 "They ne'er wrote well,—but once by chance judg'd  
 right."

\* The Tartars believe that with the spoils and arms of whomsoever they destroy in battle, they also possess his capacity and mental qualities.



PROLOGUE to the LAW of LOMBARDY.

Written by the AUTHOR.

Spoken by Mr. FARREN.

HARD is the task, in modern days to choose,  
Congenial subjects for the tragic muse:  
The historian's page, the fertile epic store,  
Were known, and ransack'd centuries before:  
Like luscious gardens, unenclos'd they lay,  
To ev'ry fault'ring bard an easy prey.  
They enter'd, and, as taste impell'd, they fed  
On Homer some, and some on Hollingshead.  
From loftiest numbers, or from humblest prose,  
As eath conspir'd, the artless structures rose.  
Thus one great labour of their work was o'er,  
They found a fable, and they sought no more.  
Careless were they of action, place, or time,  
Whose only toil was dialogue and rhyme,  
Rules which the rigid Stagyrus devis'd  
Our fathers knew not, or, if known, despis'd.  
Whilst side by side, were mingled in the scene,  
A laughing rustic, and a weeping queen,  
Space was obedient to the boundless piece,  
That op'd in Mexico, and clos'd in Greece.  
Then thick with plots the crowded tale was sown,  
'Till the divided bosom felt for none;  
They fear'd no censures of a frowning pit,  
That judg'd as loosely as the authors writ.  
But we, who pos'd in time's tardy rear,  
Before a learned tribunal now appear;  
With anxious art a fable must design,  
Where probability, and interest join:  
Where time, and place, and action, all agree  
To violate no sacred unity.  
And thus each candid critic must confess  
The labour greater and indulgence less;  
When such the task, the wonder is to meet,  
Not many pieces bad, but one complete.  
Nor let presumptuous poets fondly claim  
From rules exemption, by great Shakespeare's name;  
Though comets move with wild eccentric force,  
Yet humbler planets keep their stated course.  
But now, a bard, who touch'd your hearts before,  
Again salutes you from a neighbouring shore.  
Fir'd by the applause you gave his early lays  
He stands again a candidate for praise;  
Nor from your former favour dares foresee  
To worthless strains a partial destiny.  
But if his virgin palm was fairly won,  
And this next course with equal vigour's run,  
Now join to bind his fresher laurels on.  
He fears no jaundic'd rival's envious breath,  
The hands which twin'd, shall still preserve the wreath.

PROLOGUE BY THE AUTHOR.

Written by the AUTHOR.

Spoken by M. FARREN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING,	Mr. BENSLEY.
BIRENO,	Mr. HENDERSON.
PALADORE,	Mr. SMITH.
ASCANIO,	Mr. HURST.
RINALDO,	Mr. PACKER.
LUCIO,	Mr. FARREN.
SENATOR,	Mr. CHAMBERS.
FORESTERS,	{ Mr. WRIGHTEN, Mr. FAWCET.
SHEPHERD,	Mr. WRIGHT.
SQUIRE TO PALADORE,	{ Mr. PHILEMORE.
PRINCESS,	Miss YOUNGE.
ALINDA,	Mrs. ROBINSON.

THE  
LAW OF LOMBARDY.  
A TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Chamber in the Palace.*

BIRENO, ALINDA.

ALINDA.

I Wonder not you should suspect me slow  
In this strange office: had you but enjoind me,  
Shut out the sun ten times his annual round,  
Feed all my life on pulse, or with coarse weeds  
Obscure the little grace which nature's hand  
Has lent my outside, then, without a wherefore,  
(From the meek humbleness of love I bear you)  
My obedience wou'd have follow'd.

*Biren.* Sweet impatience,  
Smooth that contracted brow—

*Alind.*

But to commend

To any other woman, those fond vows  
I hop'd to own unpartner'd, is it less  
Than to expect my tongue suborn'd, should plead  
Against the dearest interest of my life,  
And make me earnest for my own undoing?

*Biren.*

## 2 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

*Biren.* Must I again call down the saints to witness,  
That for convenience only, not from love,  
I seek to wed the princess? my ambition  
Aims at the crown, her dower; were that bright gem  
Held by a pigmy, the meer mock of sight,  
By idiot drawling, and a shrew's perverseness,  
No less shou'd I desire it. If I prosper,  
My heart, as ever, shall be thine; and hers,  
The dull legitimate languor of the husband.

*Alind.* But when to royal state Sophia joins  
Such rare endowments, as make doubtful strife  
'Twixt nature's gifts, and fortunes; can I hope  
More than some grateful note from memory,  
How much Alinda lov'd you?

*Biren.* Trust me, fair one,  
Beauty's degrees are in the lover's fancy,  
Not in a scal'd perfection. Varying nature  
Has lineaments for every appetite:  
Not her arch'd brows, nor stature Jung-like,  
Her crisped tresses spun from finest gold,  
Nor the intelligent lustre of her eye,  
To me have half such charms as thy soft mien;  
The pure carnation of thy dimpling cheek,  
And unassuming sweet simplicity. —  
But hast thou urg'd my suit?

*Alind.* Spite of ourselves, should  
The tongue interprets from the abundant heart.  
Bireno's image filling all my thoughts,  
Cou'd I be silent on a theme so lov'd?

*Biren.* And how does she receive the gentle tale?

*Alind.* Sometimes she chides, and sometimes smiling  
tells me,

But that she knows me wise, such lavish praise  
Might hint a heart touch'd deeply, and ill suits  
The sober preference of an humble maid,  
Who cannot hope to call you hers in honour.  
Then with discreetest lessons she will school me,

To



## THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

To guard my breast 'gainst love ; forgetting still  
How much she wants the counsel she bestows.

*Biren.* Does she then love ? and how can she

*Alind.* She never told me so ;

But signs far more significant than speech  
Reveal it hourly.

*Biren.* Let me know my rival,  
Tho' my foreboding heart already whispers  
It must be Paladore.

*Alind.* Oh, rightly guess'd !  
Her love for him makes her unjust to you.

*Biren.* Curses o'ertake him ! near his brighter fires  
My star shines dimly ; I was wonder'd at  
Till this new meteor shot across men's eyes,  
And drew all gaze to follow. At our tournaments  
He foils me like a novice ; in grave council  
I prate unmark'd, while hoary heads bow down  
In reverence to his weighty utterance ;  
And thus the upstart heresy of opinion  
Runs on this smooth impostor——by what signs  
Take you this note of her affection towards him ?

*Alind.* By such we women deem infallible.  
If unexpectedly she hears him nam'd,  
Sweet discomposure seizes all her frame,  
Suffusion, softer than aurora's blush,  
Spreads o'er her beauteous cheek. If she expect  
His presence at the court, studious to please,  
Beyond her wonted elegance of dress,  
With nicer care she counsels at her glass,  
To make the daintiest workmanship of nature  
By ornament more winning.

*Biren.* Indications  
That speak, and shrewdly ; yet their vanity  
To catch the flattery of the fool they scorn,  
Will bait such hooks as these. Have you no proof  
More unequivocal ?

*Alind.*

# THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

*Alind.* What wou'd you more?  
We reason from ourself, looking within,  
We find in our own breasts the art'ording springs  
Of motions similar; when first I lov'd,  
So did I wish to please, so doubt my power,  
Yet more than this; her eye still follows him,  
And when the unwelcome hour of parting comes,  
The cheerful flame that lighted up her looks  
Expires; sighs heave, and a soft silent tear  
Steals down her cheek.

*Biren.* Enough, I'm satisfied  
She loves him, and the frost of my rejection  
Conspires in proof. Now then, my best Alinda!  
You must assist me; on this single push  
Hang all my fortunes—if my rival wed her,  
Farewel my hopes, my country—

*Alind.* How! your country!  
A voluntary exile for the loss  
Of one you swear you love not—

*Biren.* My possessions,  
The means of pleasure to my thrifless youth,  
Moulder in confiscation; thus my dukedom,  
My royal ancestry, and rank in the state,  
So scantily supported, will but mock me.  
A marriage with the princess would heal all.  
But if I fail, I will not stay to see  
Upstarts made rich by my inheritance;  
Nor the proud finger of the slave I scorn  
Point at the princely beggar.

*Alind.* Oh, good heaven!  
Devise, command—can my best industry  
Prevent this ruin? tell me but the means,  
And bid me fly.

*Biren.* No more of jealousy,  
But with appliance dext'rous call her thoughts  
To me, and my deservings; speak with slight

Yet

## THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 5

(Yet not as by suggestion) of my rival,  
I've known more way made in a woman's grace  
By such confederate arts, than could be won  
By a long siege of amorous enginry,  
Soft flatteries, sighs, protestings infinite,  
And all the fervor of impatient love:

*Alind.* But should this fail!

*Biren.* I'll spread a finer snare;  
Subtle as fabled Vulcan forg'd in Lemnos,  
To enmesh them: thy soft hand, my dear Alinda,  
Must help to hold the toils—

*Alind.* But see, she comes;  
The king too and her lover—

*Biren.* I'll retire,  
And seek thee presently: rivet thine ear  
Meantime to what they utter: thy report  
Shall somewhat shape my course: High-flighted fool!  
Check thy bold soaring, else my hot revenge  
Shall melt thy waxed plumes, and hurl thee down  
To a devouring sea that roars beneath thee. *[Exit.]*

*[Alinda retires.]*

## SCENE II.

KING, PRINCESS, PALADORE, ATTENDANTS.

*King.* You shall no more, Sophia, to the chase;  
This morning's danger makes my blood run cold.  
Had not thy well-spiced lance, brave Paladore,  
Pierc'd the huge boar that gor'd her foaming horse,  
These eyes, now rais'd in thanks to heaven and thee,  
Had wept her lifeless.

*Palad.* Ever prais'd be fortune,  
That plac'd me near her! since a common feat  
That daily dies our weapons, thus ennobled  
By blest conjunction with her precious safety,

*B.* I would

## 6 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY

I would not change for the best garland won  
By Caesar's conquering sword.

*Princ.* We are not nice  
In dangers imminent to chuse the means  
Of our deliverance; yet, believe me, Sir,  
More than for life preserv'd, I thank the chance  
That made you my preserver. Th' unwelcome hand  
Rendering us service, like sharp frost in sunshine,  
Chills the fresh blossom of our gratitude,  
Which else uncheck'd would put forth all its sweetness.

*King.* I have much serious matter for your ear:

[To Paladore.

Our helms must be lac'd close, our swords new-edg'd  
'Gainst fiercer foes than these rude foresters,  
That make us sport with peril.

*Palad.* By my life!

My exulting heart beats high to give it welcome;  
For virtue's test is action.

*King.* Thus my paper:

(Brief its contents, but fearful) Burgundy,  
Stung by refusal of my daughter's love,  
Stirs up commotion 'gainst our kingdom's peace;  
And soon the golden grain of Lombardy  
Shall be trod down beneath the furious heel  
Of peasants cas'd in iron.

*Princ.* Heaven avert it!

For sure 'twere better I had ne'er been born,  
Than live the fatal cause why war's rude blast  
Disturb'd the quiet of my father's age,  
Which soft repose shou'd foster. The griev'd people  
Will chide your gentleness, that did not bend  
My heart to this obedience; and your virtue,  
Seen thro' th' unwelcome colour of the event,  
For reverence find upbraiding.

*King.* No, Sophia!

I would not violate the meanest right  
Of my least subject, for the fear or promise

Of



## THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

Of any issue. Is my child, my daughter,  
(Sweet, duteous, amiable, born free and royal)  
Less charter'd from oppression than a stranger?  
A self-invited wooer here he sojourn'd,  
To thrive as your approving gave him licence:  
I fed him not with promise, you with hope,  
Nor shall audacious menace ere extort  
What courteely denied him.

*Palat.* To his teeth  
Hurl your defiance, King! 'tis proud to threaten,  
But baseness to be aw'd by it. From my breast  
I'd tear these hallow'd symbols, give this steel  
To be a baby's play-thing, cou'd my heart,  
Distrustful of the event, forebode one fear,  
To cast black presage on a cause so noble.

*King.* Then gem of Britain! dear in my esteem,  
As wert thou native here, be Pavia's shield  
Her pride, her pillar; yes, our hardy files,  
Led on by thee, shall drive the boaster back,  
To mourn at home his baffled preparations.

*Pal.* Oh, wou'd the fortune of this glorious strife  
Hung on my arm alone!

*King.* Our daughter's hand  
Is destin'd for a prince who draws his blood  
From the same source as mine, our kingdom's heir,  
(Did not this sweet prevention stand between)  
To bless Bireno with two matchless gifts,  
Her beauty and a royal diadem.

*Princ.* Bireno, Sir!

*King.* Even he, I know his worth—  
But is there poison in my kinsman's name?  
It pales the healthful vermeil of your cheek,  
Dims your bright eye, and veils your wonted smiles.

*Princ.* Alas! I cannot speak—

*King.* Why then, hereafter  
Will better suit this subject. Sir, farewell!

8 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

We shall expect your aid to counsel with us,  
What present mounds our wisdom, best may raise  
'Gainst this loud torrent that at distance roars,  
Ere it rush down to spread its ruin round us. [Exit.

S C E N E III.

PRINCESS, PALADORE,

*Princ.* Oh, stay, and hear me now! alas! he's gone  
Who smiles on me, and kills me; bids my heart  
Be traitor to itself, yet with soft words  
Fetters my tongue, which free, wou'd boldly answer!  
Such kindness but destroys me.

*Palad.* My soul's idol!  
I was indeed presumptuous to believe  
These humble arms were destin'd to enfold  
So vast a treasure, yet aspiring love  
Hopes things impossible.

*Princ.* Bireno! He! He!  
I'd rather waste my life in singleness;  
Like the pale votarist, pour faint orisons  
At the cold shrines of senseless marble saints,  
And wear the eternal pavement with my knees,  
Than at the sacred altar load my soul  
With holy perjuries, to love the man,  
At whose approach my heart alarm'd shrinks back,  
While thought confirms instinctive nature's hate.

*Palad.* See, like a haughty conqueror he comes;  
Pleasure and pride on his exulting brow  
At distance speak his triumph.

*Princ.* Arm me, disdain,  
To meet the bold intruder!—gentle Paladore!  
'Tis thus thy rival woo's me. Courtship's season  
Is the short date of woman's sovereignty:

For

## THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 9

For liberty, we have but in exchange  
The little tribute of a lover's sighs,  
His humble seeming, and soft courtesy;  
Yet these, he thinks too rich a sacrifice,  
And owns no advocate but pride in love.

### SCENE IV. *To them* BIRENO.

BIRENO.

Confirm'd, fair princess! by the king's command  
You see me here a joyful-vizitant.

'Tis not unknown why warlike Burgundy,  
Spreading his hostile banners to the wind,  
Makes sword and fire his dreadful harbingers.

*Princ.* The cause I have heard—but on.

*Palad.* [*aside.*] Down, swelling heart!

*Biren.* Your yet unplighted hand gives to this war  
Its edge and colour; to remove that prize  
Beyond the invader's reach, my sovereign's wisdom  
Deems the best means to blunt his hostile sword;  
Therefore on me he designs—

*Princ.* I understand;  
But have no present ear for such a theme.  
My father's goodness left my choice unfor'd  
Of one unwelcome suitor; the same justice  
Secures me from compulsion in a second.

*Biren.* And must I bear this answer to the king?

*Princ.* Myself will be my own interpreter,  
And save your trouble. Once more, sir, I thank you.

[*To Paladore and exit.*]

### SCENE V.

BIRENO, PALADORE.

*Biren.* Well! go thy ways, woman's epitome!  
Beauteous enigma! who wou'd solve you rightly,  
Must thus interpret: make your outward semblance  
An index pointing to its contrary.

210 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

When your smooth polish'd vizors beam in smiles,  
Displeasure's at your hearts; the moody brow  
Tells inward sunshine; tears are joy, not sorrow;  
You soothe where you approve not, and look gall,  
When sweet content honies your appetites.

*Palad.* These common railings 'gainst that gentle sex,  
Denote his humour more who utters them,  
Than their defect, or any deep conception.  
But you have chosen a season for hard thoughts  
Rebukes your censure; still the chamber's air  
Winnows her balmy breathing; from our eyes  
Scarce glides her beauteous form, when your dark spleen,  
As venom'd things suck poison from sweet flowers,  
Finds matter for distemper's nourishment,  
And food for calumny in excellence.

*Biren.* Her form indeed is fair.

*Palad.* Ay, and her mind  
(If more can be) more fair, more amiable.  
Thy never-render'd snow-cold Apenine,  
Is not so free from taint, as from offence  
Her spotless bosom; yet has she a tear,  
Healing as balm for other's frailties,  
That makes remission heavenly; sweet persuasion  
Hangs on her words with power oracular,  
To shame the cynic's chiding—spirit of truth!  
She is thy visible divinity,  
And 'tis thy reverence to pay homage to her.

*Biren.* 'Tis to my wish [*aside.*]—I grant her well  
endow'd,

And in fair seeming most pre-eminent;  
But for these other virtues you have nam'd,  
They are of different climes and earlier ages;  
Our Pavia's ladies, cast in earthly moulds,  
They make the most of nature's liberal gifts,  
But pleasure out to usury, and love  
As ease, convenience, or the moment sways them.

*Palad.*



# THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 71

*Palad.* You're pleasant, lord!

*Biren.* No, soberly thy friend.

Shall I be plain?

*Palad.* What call you your past measure,  
Was it a courtier's strain?

*Biren.* You love the princess?

*Palad.* And heaven may be belov'd—

*Biren.* Ay, and hop'd too;

For heaven has many mansions, and receives,

Too large for limitation, all deservers;

But in a lady's heart, there's but one place,

Though many may contend for't: therefore, friend,

Waste not your precious sighs, which might enkindle

Bright sparks of equal love in some soft breast

Destined to mate your fondness, in this wooing.

Search not the cause; believe me, on my truth,

'Tis past all reckoning hopeless.

*Palad.* Nothing's hopeless.

Though deeds, untried, oft seem impossible;

And craven sloth molting his sleekless plumes

With drowsy wonder views the adventurous wing

That soars the shining azure o'er his head.

What will not yield to daring? victory

Sits on the helm whose crest is confidence;

And boldness wins success in love's soft strife,

As in the dangerous din of rattling war.

*Biren.* How cou'd I make me sport were I light minded;

Were I malignant, mischief, from this mood,

That runs so contrary to all sober sense—

But here I rest in kindness—Be advis'd.

Push not a desperate purpose; by my life!

The princess loves you not.

*Palad.* I'll bear no more—

Matchless audacity! let me take thee in

From crown to toe, walk round thee, and survey thee

Like a prodigious thing; for such thou should'st be,

To

12 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

To put my course of love in circumscription;  
And school me, like a boy, with unsought precept.

*Biren.* Lovers are sick with fevers of the brain,  
Diseas'd by airy hope, high-flighted fancy,  
Imaginations bred from self-conceit,  
An arch-deluder, which presents the Juno  
Their frenzy grasps at, with a zone unbound;  
While, like Ixion's mistress, the coy queen  
Slumbers on golden beds in high Olympus.

*Palad.* Hear me, proud duke! had I no other spur  
But thy forbidding, were there no incitement  
From her transcendant beauty; did no beam  
Shoot from her eye to light eternal love  
At passion's altar; were she swart and froward,  
(Oh, blasphemy to think it) in despatch,  
I would assume an unfeigned ecstasy.  
Invoke her name, till echo should grow faint  
With the perpetual burden, and devise  
All means of contradiction, to proclaim  
Scorn of thy council, and defiance to thee. *[urge me.*

*Biren.* Then hear, to dash thy pride, since thus you  
My experience of her lightness, well she knows  
Would freeze me as her husband, and her hand  
(Which but to save appearances, I ask)  
I would reject if offer'd; so her craft,  
Sooths you with feign'd endearments. As a mistress,  
I find her worth my holding: but a wife,  
Fit for a prince, must come with better gifts  
Than amorous blood and beauty—Nay, but mark me.

*Palad.* Trust not too far the reverence of this place—  
Away—thou yet are safe—my sword once drawn—

*Biren.* Am I so lost in your esteem, you hold me  
(Your friend profess'd) in malice capable,  
Or falsehood thus to wound you?

*Palad.* Both, by Heaven!

*Biren.* And will maintain this thinking?

*Palad.*

# THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 11

*Palad.*

With my life —

*Biren.* 'Tis a deep venture—mine upon my truth—  
When full-orb'd Phoebe wheels her fleecy car  
To silver yon blue concave, 'midst the pines  
That wave their green tops o'er the battlement  
Of her night-chamber, in the garden meet me  
Alone: when we encounter in that place,  
You there shall listen to conditions meet  
For both our honours. So till then, farewell.

*Palad.* Alone I'll meet thee, be assur'd I will.  
Gird on thy keenest edge, if thou hast aught  
Unsettled in this world, dispatch it quickly;  
We stand upon the utmost verge of fate,  
And one, or both of us, must plunge for ever. *[Exit.]*

## SCENE VI.

*BIRENO, alone.*

The wise should watch the event on fortune's wheel,  
That for a moment circles at the top,  
And seiz'd not, vanishes—I must about it,  
My all's at stake.—Ye ministers of vengeance!  
That hide your gory locks in mist-hung caves,  
And roll your deadly eyeballs o'er the edge  
Of your insatiate daggers, shaking ever  
Dews of oblivious sleep from your stung brows,  
Receive me of your band! ne'er to know peace  
Till this keen writhing vulture quit my heart,  
And with blunt beak, and flagging wings outstretch'd,  
Drowse o'er the mangled victims of my rage.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

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## ACT II.

### SCENE I. *A Chamber.*

PRINCESS, *alone*

**O**H, blest, most blest are the insensible !  
 In the mild zone of calm indifference  
 No hatred chills them, and no passion burns ;  
 To feed, and sleep, and do observance due  
 To the stale ritual of quaint ceremony,  
 Fills up the humble measure of their hope ;  
 Smooth and unruffled glides their temperate stream,  
 And one day rounds their whole life's history.  
 Oh, had my heart been such ! but nature poiz'd  
 In distribution, when she gives the touch  
 Alive to extacy, in like extreme  
 Subjects the sense to anguish : the same soul,  
 That in the hope of wedding Paladore,  
 Enjoy'd its sum of bliss with equal pain  
 Averts me from his rival : thus entranc'd  
 'Twixt love and fear, I feel the pangs of both,  
 And the sharp conflict rends me. Ha ! my father !  
 Now comes the trial.

### SCENE II.

KING, PRINCESS.

*King.* How ! in tears, Sophia ?  
 Come, 'tis not well—I fear, I guess the cause.  
 This morn I did but hint a purpose to you,  
 Of import, dear to your own happiness,

And



THE LAW OF LOMBARDY 35

And your chang'd brow reproving my intent  
Cut short my free discourse.

*Princ.*

Oh, good, my lord,  
I am not practis'd to conceal my thoughts  
(And least from you) by casting o'er my looks  
The unalter'd vizard of tranquillity,  
When perturbation, like a sleepless guest,  
Forbids my bosom's quiet.

*King.*

I have lov'd thee  
With fondness so unbated, that 'twere needless,  
For confirmation, to attest by words, [wards thee,  
What all my whole thoughts, my life's whole carriage to-  
Have set beyond the question.

*Princ.*

Oh, to me,  
Your love has been like those perpetual springs,  
That ever flow, and waste not I my least wish  
Scarce had its birth, ere its accomplishment  
In your preventive kindness.

*King.*

Since 'tis so,  
If chance the current of my present will  
To yours run contrary, you must not deem  
That merely to enforce authority,  
Or wake controlment, which might sleep to death.  
In its disuse, I now expect the course  
Of your desires should lose themselves in mine,  
Or flow by my direction.

*Princ.*

As my father,  
The giver of my life, I reverence you ;  
Next, as your subject, my obedience stands  
Bound by the general tie ; but since your power  
Has still been temper'd so with lenity,  
That even the stranger's cause, with patient hearing,  
Is weigh'd ere you determine ; I, your daughter,  
May hope, at least, an equal privilege,  
With favour in my audience.

*King*

## 16 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

*King.* I were else  
Unnatural, withholding from my child,  
What aliens claim by justice. Give me hearing—  
The duke Bireno loves you, has my promise;  
That, like a well-grac'd advocate, my tongue  
Should win your gentle favour to his suit,  
Urging such commendations of his love,  
As modesty, though conscious of desert,  
May wish you hear, yet cannot speak itself.

*Princ.* Ah, sir! forbear, he knows my heart already,  
Already has he heard, from my own lips  
I cannot love him; poorly he engages  
Your honour'd combination, in a league  
That (whatsoe'er its issue) must conspire  
To wound your daughter's peace.

*King.* By heaven, you wrong him.  
To wound your peace! he seeks your happiness,  
And so am I his second.

*Princ.* But these means  
Are adverse to the end; for if I wed him,  
(This is no raving of rash extacy)  
On death, that only can dissolve my chain,  
Will hang my future hope: as eagerly  
As the poor weary sea-beat mariner  
Pants for the shore, so shall my outstretch'd arms  
Embrace the welcome terror. My refusal  
To you, the gentlest, kindest, best of fathers,  
Must seem repugnance harsh, and o'er my duty,  
Before untainted, casts the sickly hue  
Of pale suspicion; thus begins his love,  
Fearful to me in each alternative,

*King.* Why, this is infant rhet'ric to protest  
The impulse of a strong antipathy,  
Which never causeless swells the human breast  
Yet give no reason why.

*Princ.*

# THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 17

*Princ.* Alas! to feel it,  
O'er-masters every reason. Need we search  
To ground aversion on weigh'd argument,  
When instinct cuts the tedious process short,  
And makes the heart our umpire?

*King.* Hear me calmly—  
My days are almost number'd: this white head  
Bears not in vain its reverend monitors;  
Time puts a tongue in every hoary hair,  
To warn the wise man of mortality:  
When I am gone, behold thy single state  
Unhusbanded, unfather'd, stands expos'd,  
Ev'n as the tender solitary shrub  
On the bleak mountain's summit; every blast  
May bend or break thy sweetness; this strong fence,  
This union, would enroot its shelter round,  
And, like a forest, shield thee.

*Princ.* Let me hope  
A stronger fence in a whole people's love:  
Their grateful memory of my father's virtue,  
And loyalty hereditarily mine,  
Descending, like the sceptre, to your issue.

*King.* Think'st thou, my aspiring kinsman, whose  
ambition,  
Impatient, waits till my declining beam  
Give place to his meridian, who, already  
Wins from my side a moiety of my court,  
By his succession's hope, will tamely view  
That sceptre wielded by a woman's hand,  
Nor wrest it from thy grasp? no, my fair kingdom!  
I see the meeting torrents of contention  
Deluge thy peaceful vales, while her weak sex,  
Unable to direct, or stem the tide,  
Will be borne down, and swept to ruin with it.

*Princ.* These evils, but in possibility,  
May never come: but, oh, 'tis certain sorrow  
To promise love, obedience, duty, honour,

## 18 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

When the heart's record vouches 'gainst the tongue:  
It changes order's course; the holy tie  
Of well-proportion'd marriage still supposes  
These bonds have gone before; nor is there power  
Creative in the simple ceremony,  
The seed unsown, to give that harvest growth.

*King.* Here break we off—to sue, and sue in vain,  
But ill becomes a father: may my augury  
Be more in fear than wisdom. Hold; to-morrow  
The council meets to scan this threaten'd war:  
The people call it thine: then be thou present  
To thank and animate their zeal to serve us. *[Exit.*

### SCENE III.

PRINCESS, *alone.*

I shall attend your order. This cold parting  
Speaks his displeasure; and my heart accusom'd  
To the kind sunshine of approving smiles,  
Droops at the chilling change. Ye gentle breaths,  
Strangers as yet to love, be warn'd by me.  
Soft as the printless step of midnight sleep,  
The subtle tyrant steals into the soul:  
Once seated there, securely he controuls  
The idle strife of unimpassion'd ties,  
And laughs to scorn their sober impotence,  
As feeble vassals lift their arms in vain,  
In the unequal conflict soon o'erthrown,  
They prove their weakness, and his power supreme.

*[Exit.*

### SCENE IV. A Garden.

RINALDO *alone. Night.*

He must pass this way: thro' the postern gate  
That leads here only, with distemper'd pace  
I saw him hasten. Since the evening banquet

His



## THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 19

His wild demeanour has put on more change,  
 Than yonder fickle planet in her orb.  
 Just now he seiz'd his sword, look'd at, and seiz'd it,  
 Then girt it round him, while his bloodshot eye,  
 And heaving bosom, spoke the big conception  
 Of some dire purpose. There is mischief towards—  
 I may perhaps prevent it—these fall shrubs  
 Will hide me from his view.—Soft, soft, 'tis he.

[Rinaldo retires.]

### SCENE V. PALADORE *alone.*

*Palad.* Why do I shake thus? if, indeed, she's false,  
 I shou'd rejoice to have the spell unbound  
 That chains me to delusion. He swears deeply:  
 But bad men's oaths are breath, and their base lies  
 With holiest adjurations stronger vouch'd  
 Than native truth, which center'd in itself,  
 Rests in its simpleness; then this bold carriage  
 Urging the proof by test infallible,  
 The witness of my fight. Why these combin'd,  
 (Spite of my steady seeming) viper-tooth'd  
 Gnaw at my constancy, and inward spread  
 Suggestions, which unmaster'd, soon would change  
 The ruddy heart to blackness. But, oh, shame!  
 These doubts are slander's aleigers.—Sweetest innocence!  
 That now, perhaps, lapt in Elysian sleep  
 Seest heaven in vision, let not these base sounds  
 Creep on thy slumber, lest they startle rest,  
 And change thy trance to horror.—Lo, he comes:  
 Yon light that glimmers 'twixt the quivering leaves  
 (Like a small star) directs his footsteps hither.

### SCENE VI.

*To him* BIRENO, *with a Lantborn.*

*Biren.* Your pardon, sir; I fear I've made you wait—  
 But here, beneath the window of his mistress,

20 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

A lover favour'd, and assur'd like you,  
Must have a thousand pleasant fantasies  
To entertain his musing.

*Palad.* Sir, my fancy  
Has various meditations ; no one thought  
Mix'd with disloyalty of her whose honour  
Your boldness wou'd attain.

*Biren.* Then you hold firm,  
I am a boaster ?

*Palad.* 'Tis my present creed.

*Biren.* 'Twere kind, perhaps, to leave you in that error.  
The wretch who dreams of bliss, while his sleep lasts,  
Is happy as in waking certainty ;  
But if he's rous'd, and rous'd to misery,  
He sure must curse the hand that shook his curtain.

*Palad.* I have no time for maxims, and your mirth  
Is most unseasonable. Thus far to endure  
Perhaps is too much tameness.—To the purpose——

*Biren.* With all convenient speed. You're not to  
learn,

We have a law peculiar to this realm,  
That subjects to a mortal penalty,  
All women nobly born (be their estate  
Single or husbanded) who to the shame  
Of chastity, o'er-leap its thorny bounds,  
To wanton in the flowery path of pleasure.  
Nor is the proper issue of the king  
By royalty exempted.

*Palad.* So I have heard.

But wherefore urge you this ?

*Biren.* Not without reason.

I draw my sword in peace. Now place your lips  
Here on this sacred cross. By this deep oath,  
Most binding to our order, you must swear,  
Whate'er you see, or whatsoe'er your wrath  
From what you see, that never shall your tongue  
Reveal it to the danger of the princess.

*Palad.*

## THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 21

*Palad.* Almost superfluous bond !—but on ; I swear.

*Biren.* Hold yet a little. Now, Sir, once again  
Let this be touch'd.—Your enmity to me,  
If by the process it should be provok'd,  
Must in your breast be smother'd, not break out  
In tilting at my life, nor your gage thrown  
For any after quarrel. The cause weigh'd,  
I might expect your love: but 'tis the stuff,  
And proper quality of hoodwink'd rage,  
To wrest offence from kindness.

*Palad.* Should your proof  
Keep pace with your assurance, scorn, not rage,  
Will here be paramount, and my sword sleep,  
From my indifference to a worthless toy,  
Valued but in my untried ignorance.

*Biren.* So you determine wisely. I must bind you  
To one condition more. If I make palpable  
Her preference in my favour, you must turn  
Your back on Lombardy, and never more  
Seek her encounter.

*Palad.* By a soldier's faith !  
Should it be so, I would not breathe your air  
A moment longer for the sov'reignty  
Of all the soil wash'd by your wand'ring Po.

*Biren.* Summon your patience now, for sure you'll  
need it.

*Palad.* You have tried it to the last : dally no more,  
I shiver in expectation. Come, your proofs.

*Biren.* Well, you will have them. Know you first this  
writing ? [Gives a paper.]

*Palad.* It is the character of fair Sophia.

*Biren.* I think so, and as such receiv'd it from her ;  
Convey'd with such sweet action to my hand,  
As wak'd the nimble spirit of my blood,  
Whispering how kind were the contents within.  
This light will aid the moon, tho' now she shines  
In her full splendor. At your leisure read it.

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*Palad.* [*reading.*] Kind words indeed ; I fear, I fear too common.

*Biren.* It works as I could wish. How his cheek whitens !

His fiery eye darts thro' each tender word  
As it would burn the paper.

*Palad.* [*reading.*] Ever constant——

Let me look once again. Is my fight false ?

Oh, wou'd it were ! fain wou'd I cast the blame,  
To save her crime on my imperfect sense.

But did she give you this ?

*Biren.* Look to the address. [*much.*

*Palad.* Oh, darkness on my eyes ! I've seen too  
There's not a letter, but like necromancy

Withers my corporal functions. Shame confound her !

*Biren.* As you before were tardy of belief,  
You now are rash. Behold these little shadows.

These you have seen before. [*Producing two pictures.*

*Palad.* What's this, what's this !

My picture, as I live, I gave the false one,

And her's she promis'd me ! oh ! woman's faith !

I was your champion once, deceitful sex !

Thought your fair minds—but hold, I may be rash—

This letter, and these pictures might be yours

By the king's power, compelling her reluctant

To write and send them ; therefore let me see

All you have promis'd.—You expect her summons

At yon Miranda—

*Biren.* Yes, the time draws near ;

She ever is most punctual. This small light

Our wonted signal : stand without its ray ;

For shou'd she spy more than myself beneath,

Fearing discovery, she'll retire again

Into her chamber—when her beauteous form

Breaks like the moon, as fair, tho' not so cold,

From yonder window.

*Palad.* Ha ! by hell it opens !—

*Biren.*



# THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 23

*Biren.* Stand you apart a moment. While I climb,  
Yon orb, now braz'd to this accustom'd scene,  
Will shew you who invites me. I'll detain her,  
To give you ample leisure for such note  
As counterfeits abide not. [*Bireno retires.*]

## SCENE VII.

PALADORE, *alone.*

Death! 'tis she!

There's not a single braid that binds her hair,  
One little shred of all that known attire  
That wantons in the wind, but to my heart  
Has sent such sweet disturbance, that it beat  
Instinctive of her coming, ere my sight  
Enjoy'd the beauteous wonder.—Soft! what now!  
See she lets down the cordage of her shame,  
To hoist him to her arms, I'll look no more—  
Distraction! Devil! how she welcomes him!  
That's well! that's well! again: grow to her lips—  
Poison and aspics rot them! now she woo's him,  
Points to her chamber, and invites him inward.  
May adders hiss around their guilty couch!  
And ghosts of injur'd lovers rise to scare them!—  
Ay, get you gone—oh, for a griffin's wing,  
To bear me thro' the casement! deeds like this  
Shou'd startle every spirit of the grove,  
And wake enchantment from her spell hung grot,  
To shake the conscious roof about their heads,  
And bare them to the scoff of modest eyes  
Twin'd in the wanton fold. Oh, wretch accurs'd!  
See there the blasted promise of thy joys,  
Thy best hopes bankrupt—Do I linger still?  
Here find a grave, and let thy mangled corse,  
When her lascivious eye peers o'er the lawn,  
Sate the harlot's gaze. [*Going to fall on his sword,*

*Rinaldo rushes out and prevents him.*

*Rinal-*

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*Rinald.* What frenzy's this !  
Arm'd 'gainst your life † in pity turn the point  
On your old faithful servant, whose heart heaves  
Almost to bursting to behold you thus.

*Palad.* Hast seen it then ?

*Rinald.* I have seen your wild despair ;  
And bless'd be the kind monitor within  
That led me here to save you.

*Palad.* Rather curs'd  
Be thy officious fondness. Since it dooms me  
To ling'ring misery, Give me back my sword—  
Is't come to this ! oh, I could tear my hair !  
Rip up this credulous breast ! blind dotard ! fool !  
Did wit, or malice, ere devise a legend  
To parallel this vile reality ?

*Rinald.* Disgrace not the best gift of manly nature,  
Your reason in this wild extravagance.

*Palad.* And think'st thou I am mad without a cause !  
I'll tell thee—'death it choaks me—lead me hence—  
I will walk boldly on the billowy deep,  
Or blindfold tread the sharp and perilous ridge  
Of icy Caucasus, nor fear my footing ;  
Play with a fasting lion's fangs unharmed,  
And stroke his rage to tameness.—But hereafter,  
When men would try impossibilities,  
Let them seek faith in woman.—Furies seize them †

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

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A C T III.

SCENE I. *A Hall.*

BIRENO, *alone.*

**H**ER death must be the means. If these be crimes,  
Thou bright ambition, whose rare alchimy,  
Like Midas' palm, turns all it grasps to gold,  
Give them thy glorious splendor ! fear, not virtue,  
Keeps mankind honest. Each inordinate wish  
Is guilt unacted, and the cannon points  
More 'gainst the coward heart, that wou'd and dare not,  
Than the bold deed, that braves the penalty.

SCENE II.

BIRENO, ASCANIO.

Welcome, Ascanio ! thanks for this kind speed  
To meet my summons. I have business for thee,  
Worthy thy subtle genius ; thou shalt aid me  
To spread a banquet forth, where two sharp guests,  
Ambition and revenge, shall both be feasted,  
Even to satiety.

*Ascan.*

I will not pall

Performance by protesting. Is there aught  
In which a pliant tongue, and ready hand,  
(No despicable engines) may do service ?  
To their best cunning use them ; your poor bondman  
Will think himself much honour'd in obedience.

*Biren.* I have profess'd myself thy friend, Ascanio !  
And when the golden autumn of my hopes,

Whose

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(Whose rich maturity I now would hasten)  
Is ripe for bearing, thou shalt taste the fruit  
That bends my swelling branches.

*Ascan.* I have liv'd  
The creature of your bounty : and my life  
I would cast from me, like a useless load,  
When to your gracious ends unprofitable.

*Biren.* My means have hitherto been poor and scanty,  
My power confin'd ; but I shall be, Ascanio,  
Like a great river, whose large urns dispense  
Abundance to the subject rills around him,  
Till they o'erpeer their banks.

*Ascan.* Oh, my good lord !

*Biren.* I'll trust thee as I know thee—for a villain—[*Aside.*  
Place thyself near me when the council meets,  
(I shall make matter for them they foresee not)  
Whate'er I urge, or whomsoever I charge,  
Be ready thou with the grave mockery  
Of uplift eyes, thy hand thus on thy breast  
And heaven-attesting oaths to second me.

*Ascan.* Prime is the catalogue of mortal sins,  
I hold unthankfulness and a friend's need,  
Makes fiction virtue when its end is kindness.

*Biren.* To give more ready credence to the imposture  
Put on reluctant seeming ; earnestly,  
Entreat, they urge you not ; sadden thy brow,  
And cry, " alas ! compel me not to speak—  
" I know not what I saw." Mumble some cant,  
" Of frailty, and compassion, sins of youth,  
" The danger of the law, if it were urg'd  
" Gainst all transgressions : " thus shall thy declining  
Be eked out to a stubborn certainty  
In each suspended hearer.

*Ascan.* Nay, my Lord ;  
Disparage not the good gifts were born with me,  
To think I can want schooling for this office.

*Biren.*



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*Biren.* I pray you pardon me—oh, Nature! Nature!  
[*Aside.*]

There is a pride even in stark villainy,  
Which flattery's heat must soften, ere the metal  
Bend to our purposes—Come this way with me,  
The hall will soon be throng'd; what more remains  
I will impart within.—No ceremony. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III.

#### LUCIO, and OFFICER.

*Offic.* See where they pass; what hodes that conference?

*Luc.* Danger, my life on't. That smooth knave, Alcanio,  
Is the Duke's crucible, his breast receives  
The mass of his crude projects, and his brain  
A subtle fire refines the drossy ore,  
To bear the ready stamp for present mischief.

*Offic.* The Duke of late grows past his custom courteous,  
Joins hands with us, and calls us by our names,  
Gives praise, and largess to the soldiery,  
Whom he was wont to stile, state-caterpillars,  
Burthens of peace, and but endur'd in war,  
As necessary evils.

*Luc.* It denotes

(Or I lack charity) trouble to the state.  
I know him proud, subtle, and pitiless;  
Nor will his nature change these elements,  
However for a season he put on  
A smoother guise, and fashion suitable  
To the end he aims at.

*Offic.* Best conceal these thoughts,

For one day he may rule us,

*Luc.* Ay, that may,

If I mistake not, he will snatch from chance,  
And make a certainty. But see the king.  
The providence of heaven be ever round him!

SCENE

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SCENE IV.

KING, *Counsellors, Knights, Attendants, &c.*

Health to your Majesty !

*King.*

Thanks, gentle friends !

But why this faintness in your salutations ?

Why wear your brows that ominous livery ?

I trust our gallant spirits will not palter,

Because a rash invader threatens us.

When I was young as you, to hear of war

Made my blood dance : but these good days are past,

This sapless trunk shrinks from its mailed bark ;

Yet age has still its use, count me your steward,

Holding the honours of the state in trust

For all deservers ;—she shall better thank you ;

SCENE V.

*To the above, PRINCESS, Attendants.*

More retribution dwells in beauty's smile.

Than in whole volumes of an old man's praise.

These are thy champions ; give your women tasks,

Bid all the looms of Pavia ply their labours,

A scarf for ev'ry warrior, they'll deserve them. [tokens

*Princ.* They will not want my thanks, nor such poor  
How much I prize their worth ; their high-touch'd  
virtue

Finds in itself the source and end of action ;

Secures its right to praise, but scorns to take it.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

To them, BIRENO, ASCANIO.

*King.* Welcome, my cousin ! doubt not of my zeal,  
Tho' ill has the success kept pace with it,  
To speed your amorous suit, still let us hope,  
Time, and your fair pretensions, will have weight  
To win her to our wishes.

*Biren.* Let it pass ;  
I must take comfort : women's appetites  
Will be their own purveyors. Are we met ?  
The hall, methinks, seems full.

*King.* Where's Paladore ?  
He had our summons, yet I see him not :  
His skill in war, and wisdom to advise,  
Have been most tutelary to our realm,  
And well deserve the waiting.

*Biren.* Take your place ;  
He cannot now be present ; when we are seated,  
I will declare the reason.

*Princ. [Aside.]* Ha ! not present !  
What fatal bar prevents him ? Oh, my heart !  
Is Paladore the fountain of thy life,  
That thy stream scarce can flow, when sever'd from him ?

*[They take their places ; the Princess on the King's  
right hand, a little beneath him. Biren and Asca-  
nio in the front of the stage, some seated, others  
standing round.]*

*Biren.* The danger of our frontiers, you, sage lords,  
Calls this assembly ; but, as wise physicians,  
The heart being touch'd, neglect the extremities,  
Giving their first care to the seat of life :  
So now the wounded vitals of our honour,  
Demand our prior tence.

D

*King.*

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*King.* Speak, good cousin !  
Do dark conspiracy, and home-bred treason,  
(Unnatural leaguers with a foreign foe)  
Bid the sharp sword of vengeance turn its edge  
Gainst our own children ?

*Biren.* Yes ; though nature bleeds,  
Justice will take her course, I see before me  
The prime of the kingdom ; and from some among you,  
Since they, in whose authority abides  
The executive of power, best can tell  
I now wou'd hear, why do our registers  
Contain that rigorous ordinance which respects  
The chastity of women ?

*First Sen.* To that question,  
The law's preamble answers. 'Tis rehears'd,  
That the wild licence of our countrywomen,  
O'er leapt all modest bounds. Sweet pudency  
(That ruby of the sex) had been cast by  
For casual wantonness, till our name abroad  
Became a by-word, and confusion, strange,  
Disturb'd domestic peace. A spurious issue,  
The slips of chance and wildness, were engrafted  
In rich inheritances, while the fire  
Careless'd the child not his, and left to fortune,  
The true heirs of his fondness : these abuses  
Required an iron curb ; so pass'd the law,  
Making transgression death, with no remittance  
To high rank, or degree, in the offender,  
But in its bloody gripe comprizing all.

*Biren.* And is this so allow'd ?

*First Sen.* 'Tis so allow'd ;  
Nor is there a decretal in our rolls,  
Of less ambiguous import, or more known.

*King.* This is beyond divining : I have mark'd  
[To the Princess, half aside.]  
His changing feature : some strong passion shakes him.

*Princ.*



# THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 31

*Princ.* He plays emotion well, most masterly,  
Even to the life of feigning.

*Biren.* May I on?  
Or must I, like a novice to your forms,  
First prove my right of audience?

*King.* Be not anger'd;  
We questioned not your right—All counsellors,  
Speak what they list with freedom. You, our cousin,  
Have with your right, pre-audience.

*Princ.* Pray, proceed.

*Biren. (to the Senator).* Most learned lord, now please  
you to recite  
The dangerous predicament of those  
Who do awake this statute?

*First Sen.* Willingly.  
'Tis there provided, that, the accus'd being cited—  
In the king's presence, he who brings the charge,  
Shou'd state each circumstance: that done, the herald  
Thrice in six hours, first, in the market place,  
Next in the Hippodrome, last in the porch  
Of the great temple, must invite all knights  
(Whether impell'd by pity, love, or justice)  
To appear her champions in the marshal'd lists:  
There, if the accuser falls, she is held free,  
And her fair fame restor'd; but, if he conquers,  
The event confirms her guilt, and the sharp axe  
Severs the wanton's life.

*Biren.* Then in this peril  
Stand I at present—Bid your trumpets sound;  
And call forth every bold adventurer,  
To try what desperate valour may achieve  
'Gainst truth and my keen sword.

*King.* But whither would'st thou?  
Suspense and horror sit on ev'ry brow;  
Like the red comet, thy denouncing eye,  
Forebodes disaster.

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*Biren.* Oh, relentless justice !  
If these be drops of weakness, let them fall :  
'Tis the last tribute of a human sorrow,  
And now I am wholly thine.

*King.* Pry'thee, go on.

*Biren.* 'Twere vain to waste your patience in persuasion ;

I would not wantonly play with the fangs  
Of such a lion law, whose terrible roar  
Must be appeas'd with blood—So rests my truth.  
A lover's fondness, last night, prompted me,  
Attended by this gentleman. [*Pointing to Ascanio.*

*Ascan.* Curs'd chance !

Oh, would the darkness of the delving mole  
Had been my portion ; then I had not seen—  
What have I said ? nay do not call on me :  
Was it for this I was commanded hither ?  
I'll close my lips for ever.

*First Sen.* We have ways  
To force a necessary truth—my Lord,  
Please you proceed—the rack shall make him answer.  
Have eye upon him—He was your companion.

*Biren.* He was, he was—when love or destiny  
Led me a wanderer, in the palace garden,  
To gaze upon the window of the princess.  
When, oh, sad object for a lover's eyes !  
The casement open'd, and the full-orb'd moon,  
Bright as the radiance of meridian day,  
Shew'd me a lusty rival in her arms,  
Embracing, and embrac'd— [*All rise from the table.*

*King.* Shame ! Death ! Confusion !  
My daughter ! oh, my daughter !

*Princ.* Host of heaven !  
Does no deep thunder roll, no lightning flash ?  
Can the tremendous couriers of your wrath,  
Sleep o'er this perjury ?

*Biren.*

*Biren.* My gage is thrown ;  
And here I stand to answer with my life,  
If I have charg'd her falsely.

*Asc. [Kneeling.]* On my knees,  
If ever pity touch'd your noble breast,  
I beg you speak no more.

*Princ. [To Ascanio.]* Thou vile confederate  
Of his blood-thirsty malice ! have I liv'd  
To hear a wretch suborn'd, his sycophant,  
Mock me with intercession ? *[To Bireno.]* I behold thee,  
And scorn so struggles with astonishment,  
That my full heart, and intercepted tongue  
Almost refuse their active offices,  
Till passion's choak'd in silence.

*King.* Powers of mercy !  
Am I reserv'd for this ? my only child,  
The pride, the joy, the treasure of my soul,  
My age's cordial, and my life's best prop,  
In the sweet spring, and blossom of her youth, *[sneal]*  
Thus blasted in my sight ! — *[To Bireno.]* But, oh, dark  
Whom hell let loose to spread destruction round thee,  
Why does thy vengeance fasten upon me ?  
Have I deserv'd this from thee ? well thou know'st  
I strove to make her thine ; I would have given thee  
My crown and daughter. Thou requit'st my love,  
By daggers steep'd in poison to my heart.

*Biren.* I thank thy kindness, and forgive thy rage ;  
The father shall have licence — Honour, witness !  
Nor malice, nor ambition loos'd my tongue,  
To this heart-rending office. Reverend Lords !  
Let your unclouded wisdom judge between us.

*Princ.* Can I be patient ? most abandon'd ruffian !  
Thou scoffer at all ties ! with the same breath  
That violates a virgin's sanctity,  
(Holy and pure beyond thy gross conceiving)  
Thus conscious of thy life, dar'st thou invoke,

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Honour to witness for thee? wherefore call  
On these to judge between us? see, barbarian!  
Amaz'd and struck with horror, they have heard thee;  
Too well thou know'st, they must pronounce me  
guilty;

Thy oath must be their law: but there is one,  
An unseen judge, an all-discerning eye:  
Now if thou dar'st look up, poor shivering wretch!  
He views the dark recesses of thy soul:  
Tremble at him thy judge!

*Biren.* I were a slave,

Fit for abuses, could I tamely bear  
To see the rich reversion of my blood  
Seiz'd by a base and spurious progeny,  
An alien Briton, in his sport of lust,  
Stamping a brood of illegitimate kings;  
To bend our necks to bastard tyranny.

*King.* An alien Briton!

*Biren.* Bid her answer thee,  
Call for her paramour, her Paladore,  
Say, why is he not present?

*Princ.* Why indeed!

Hast thou not practis'd on his precious life?  
And to consummate this day's guilt and horror,  
Crown'd perjury with murder?

*King.* Paladore!

Search, find him out; put pinions to your speed,  
And bear him to our presence.

*Biren.* Spare your labour——

Fear will outstrip their haste—the dastard's gone;  
He had my challenge for this injury,  
And answer'd it by flight.

*King.* Confusion! fled!  
Am I then doubly wretched! must she die!  
And die dishonour'd too?

*Princ.* [Kneeling.] All-seeing Heaven!  
If e'er thy interposing providence

Dash'd



# THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 35

Dash'd the audacious councils of the wicked ;  
 If innocence, ensnar'd, may raise its eye,  
 In humble hope, to thy eternal throne,  
 Look down, and succour me ! I kneel before thee,  
 Distrest, forlorn, abandon'd to despair,  
 By all deserted, and my life beset ;  
 The man, my soul adores, traduc'd, and wrong'd :  
 But, oh, the cruel shafts strikes deeper still !  
 While the envenom'd rancour of this fiend  
 Casts its contagion on my spotless fame,  
 And, unrebuk'd, persists to blast my virtue.

*Biren.* Hear, she avows her love——

*Princ.* Yes, glory in it——

*King.* Ha, have a care, rash girl ! nor turn my grief  
 To curses on thy head—dar'st thou confirm  
 Thy doubtful infamy ?

*Princ.* A love so pure,

What bosom might not feel, what tongue not own ?  
 It was a fault to hide the secret from you :  
 But are such sighs as vestal breasts might heave,  
 Such spotless vows as angel might record,  
 Pollution worthy death ? these are my crimes ;  
 And if I labour with a guilt more black,  
 May the full malice of that villain reach me.

*King.* What can I think ? his absence—yet thy truth,  
 Thy nature's modesty plead strongly for thee—  
 Away with doubt—oh, thou obdurate heart !

*Biren.* We trifle time—the lists must be prepar'd,  
 The heralds sound defiance——

*Princ.* Hold a moment——

I'll tell thee how to arm thee for the combat :  
 Steep thy keen sword in poison, that no balm  
 May heal the wounds it gives, but each be mortal ;  
 Let a staunch blood-hound, with devouring fangs,  
 And eye-balls fiery red, couch o'er thy helm ;  
 The deadly fable of thy mail besmear'd

With

## 36 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

With scaffolds, wheels, and engines, virgin's heads  
Fresh bleeding from the axe's severing stroke :  
Scorn thou the mean device of vulgar knights,  
Who fight for what they reverence, truth and honour ;  
But be profess'd their champion whom thou serv'st,  
And write in bloody letters, hell and falsehood.

*Biren.* This passion, lady ! ill becomes your state ;  
Shame is wash'd out by sorrow, not by anger.

*King.* Hence, from my sight, detested parricide !  
Assassin ! butcher ! lest these feeble hands,  
Brac'd by my wrongs to more than mortal strength,  
Fix on thy throat, and bare thy treacherous heart.

*Biren.* Old man, I go,—compassion for thy grief,  
Forbids me to retort these outrages.

Let frenzy take its course—when next we meet,  
Summon thy fortitude ; and learn, mean time,  
Crowns cannot save the wearer from affliction,  
But kings, like meaner men, were born to suffer.

[*Exeunt Bireno, Alcanio, Senators.*]

## SCENE VII.

### KING, PRINCESS.

*King.* Morality from thee ! he braves high heaven,  
And well may scorn my anger. Oh, my child !  
This little hour, while I can call thee mine,  
Close let me strain thee to my bursting heart :  
Alas ! thy aged father can no more  
Than thus to fold thee ; pour these scalding tears,  
And drench thy tender bosom with his sorrows.

*Princ.* By my best hopes of happiness hereafter !  
To see that reverend frame thus torn with anguish ;  
To hear those heart-ferch'd groans, is greater misery,  
Than all the horrors of the doom that waits me ;  
I could put on a Roman constancy,

And

THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 37

And go to death like sleep, did no soft sorrow  
Hang on the mourning of surviving friends,  
And wake a keener pang for their affliction.

SCENE VIII. *To them,* LUCIO.

*Luc.* Forgive the obedience of reluctant duty !  
I have the council's order to commit  
The Princess to a guard's close custody.

*King.* Thou art my subject, Lucio ! and my soldier ;  
Do thy unhappy master one last service ;  
Draw forth thy sword, and strike it through my heart.

*Princ.* No ; let our grief be sacred : if we weep,  
Let them not see, and triumph in our tears.  
Martyrs have died in voluntary flames,  
And heroes rush'd on death inevitable,  
By faith inspir'd, or glory. Thou, Sophia !  
Sustain'd alone by peace and innocence,  
Meet fate as firmly, and transcend their daring. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

## A C T IV.

SCENE I. *A Forest.*PALADORE, RINALDO *following.*

PALADORE.

**A**M I the slave of sense, that know her sickle,  
 Ungrateful, perjur'd, yet still doat thus fondly ?  
 Faith, prudence, honour, governed appetites,  
 (Whole everlasting bonds make passion wise)  
 In her were seeming, or like ornament  
 Thrown by, or worn at pleasure ; then this sorrow  
 Hangs on her outside only, that's unchang'd,  
 For falshood did not dim her radiant eyes,  
 Her cheek was damask'd with as pure a rose,  
 Her breath as odorous, when she most deceiv'd,  
 As when her virtue, like her specious form,  
 Seem'd spotless, and unparagon'd.

*Rinald.*

My Lord !

Court not this solitude, speak out your grief ;  
 Mine is no flinty breast ; this dangerous spleen,  
 That makes your bane its nurture, then shews worst,  
 When nothing spent in loudness, and complaint,  
 Like a deep stream it rolls its noiseless way,  
 Mining the banks in silence.

*Palad.*

Wou'd the pain

Vanish with the exposure of the cause,  
 I shou'd make blunt the patience of your ear  
 By endless iteration. But why tell thee ?  
 Think'st thou there is a charm in soothing words  
 To pluck the sting from anguish ? good Rinaldo,  
 Thou hadst a son and lost him.

*Rinald.*



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*Rinald.* True, I had so.

*Palad.* See there, his very name provokes thy tears.  
 Say, can wise counsel stop them? Shall I tell thee,  
 The lot of mortals is mortality?  
 That fate will take its course, 'twas Heav'n's high will;  
 And man is born to sorrow. This is wife;  
 The sum of consolation. Strains like these  
 Flow smoothly from the tongues of moralists,  
 Patient as sleep in other's sufferings,  
 But vex'd as wasps and hornets in their own.

*Rinald.* From these imperfect starts I cannot answer;  
 They speak but passion. If my guests deceive not,  
 A woman sure has wrong'd you.

*Palad.* A true woman;  
 I thought her angel once; most basely wrong'd me.  
 Yet if revenge kept measure with her shame,  
 I could wash out in her polluted blood  
 This stain to modesty. Yes, fair falsehood!  
 Should I accuse thee of the incontinence  
 My blasted eyes have witness'd, the stern law  
 Wou'd give me ample vengeance.

*Rinald.* Your great spirit  
 (Whoe'er she be that thus has injur'd you)  
 Wou'd scorn your reparation from that law,  
 The shame of even justice

*Palad.* Fear not; still she twines  
 Here round my heart-strings. No, let late remorse,  
 For sure it will o'ertake, punish her sin.  
 But hie thee back to Pavia presently,  
 Dismiss my attendants, (useless pageantry  
 To my now alter'd state!) send hither to me  
 My arms and horses; these may hasten death  
 Fitting a soldier; then return and seek me.  
 A little longer will I hold in life,  
 Till in requital of her father's kindness,

I render

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I render some brave service. 'Midst these oaks,  
Till you return, I'll keep my lonely haunt.

*Rinal.* There stands an humble hamlet in yon glade,  
Own'd by some simple peasants, who supply  
The western suburbs with such homely fare  
As their few fields afford; thither bestow you,  
And take some nourishment. I will return  
With my best diligence.

*Palad.* Go, get thee gone.  
Sorrow's my food; I'll drink my falling tears.  
Ye savage denizons of this wild wood,  
Gaunt wolves, and tusky boars! no more my hounds  
Shall dash the spangled dew-drops from your brakes!  
No more with echoing cries, or mellow horn,  
I'll rouse your dreadful slumber! sleep securely—  
With disposition deadly as your own,  
I go to mingle with you. [Exeunt severally.]

## SCENE II.

### TWO FORESTERS.

*First Forest.* This place will suit our purpose, 'twere  
lost time

To lead her further: so we but dispatch her,  
No matter for the spot. The deed once done,  
The Duke will not be nice, but pay us nobly.

*Second Forest.* Half of our hire's to come. How shall  
we do it?

Stab her, or strangle?

*First Forest.* Make this cord her necklace:  
Blood may beget suspicion. When she's dead,  
We'll drag her body to yon hazel copse,  
And leave the maws of wolves to bury it.  
There's scarce a bush in this green labyrinth  
But is familiar to me. Many a traveller,  
When I was master of as stout a gang

As

## THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 41

As ere defied the law, here has paid down  
His life in conflict for the gold I wanted,  
And never more was heard of.

*Second Forest.*                      Sound your horn.  
I told her, we'd a little on before  
To give our horses forage, and directed  
Her way to follow; shou'd she miss the path,  
Her ear will be her guide—See, Carlo! see,  
The pretty innocent caught by her eye  
Stops for a while to pluck the velvet bells  
That blow beneath her feet, then forward bounds,  
Light as the roe, till some fresh floweret  
Lures her again.

*First Forest.*                      Ay, like the lamb that plays,  
And crops his pasture, in the butcher's eye,  
Even while the knife's a whetting. Hush! she's here.

### SCENE III. To them ALINDA.

*Alind.* Beneath a rugged thorn I found this flower  
Blushing unmark'd its odorous life away;  
I'll wear it in my breast, and all who see,  
Will praise its beauty, modest worth's sweet emblem,  
That first must be conspicuous ere 'tis priz'd.  
Oh, are you there? I'm ready, my good guides!  
Where is our equipage? the way's but short,  
We shall be there ere moonshine.

*First Forest.*                      Pretty lady!  
You have a longer journey than you wot of,  
And a dark dreary road to travel thro'.

*Alin.* Why then the Duke deceiv'd me, for he said  
The way was pleasant, and the distance nothing.

*Second Forest.* We have helped many forward the same  
way,  
And all were much averse to travel it.

*Alind.*                      They had no lover to obey like me,  
For I am light, and were it ten times further,

E

To

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To please my Lord I'd go it blithely.  
Come, come, to horse.

*First Forest.* Are you prepar'd to die?

*Alind.* Mercy defend me! how! prepar'd to die!  
'Tis a strange question.

*First Forest.* But most seasonable;  
As fit as if your couch were spread at midnight  
To ask if you were weary. With our will  
We do it not, for we were gently bred,  
And hous'd with gallants once; but this rough trade  
Necessity enforces. Come, prepare.

*Alind.* What do you search for? and why turn you  
pale?

You make me shake, to see your stedfast eye.  
Does this become the servants of the Duke,  
To frighten whom they shou'd protect from fear?

*Second Forest.* We are, indeed, the servants of the  
For we receive his hire; then for your fears, [Duke,  
We mean to rid you of them by your death.

*Alind.* Can this be sport? alas! what have I done,  
That such detested thoughts shou'd rise in you?

*First Forest.* You are troublesome. Our business is  
to kill you.

If you have a ready prayer, and brief, kneel there,  
And say it presently. We run great hazard  
To let you live so long.

*Alind.* I'll kneel to you,  
Make you my saint, if you'll have mercy on me.  
I never injur'd you, nay, cou'd not injure,  
For till this hour that I was made your charge,  
I never saw you. Do not turn away.  
Think how you'll answer this to him whose love  
Trusted me to your care. He will require  
A strict account.

*Second Forest.* Pr'ythee let go my arm.

*Alind.* May I not know why you do wish to kill me?  
If for these sparkling bawbles, take them freely;



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Rob me of all, but do not murder me.  
I am not fit to die.

*First Forest.* We need not thank you  
For what you can't withhold. Fall to your prayers.

*Alind.* But are you not the servants of the Duke?  
Think how you swore to tend me faithfully.  
How he enjoin'd you, as you priz'd his favour.  
Ev'n in your looks he'll read this cruelty,  
And find how you have abus'd him. Think on that.

*First Forest.* 'Twere pity she shou'd die in ignorance.  
Caught in the falcon's pounce, the dove as well  
Might guggle to the kite to stoop, and save her,  
As you cry to Bireno. Know, 'tis he  
Who laid this snare, and pays us for your blood.

*Alind.* The duke Bireno?

*Second Forest.* Yes, the duke Bireno.  
You have been privy to some passages  
Require concealment. Being wise, he thinks  
They are safest when you are dumb, so gives us gold  
To stop your blabbing. If you doubt our word,  
Peruse that paper. Are you satisfied? *(Shews a paper.)*

*Alind.* Yes, if 'tis satisfaction to be torn  
With worse than death ere death, I'm satisfied.  
But yet you will not kill me.

*First Forest.* There's no end.  
She'll prate us from our purpose. Bind her arms.  
All strife is vain.

*Alind.* Oh, first yet hold a moment;  
You murder more than one. An innocent pledge  
Of my disastrous love leaps at my side,  
And joins his speechless prayer.

*Second Forest.* And not his wife!  
Why then your head's a forfeit to the law,  
And we but take before, what sport or malice  
Might make you render at the bloody block,  
With process more afflicting.

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*Alind.* Barbarous villains!  
Is there no help? oh, spare me!—with my cries  
I'll wake the dead.

*Second Forest.* Dispatch her with your dagger.  
Be quick.

*First Forest.* 'Tis done. [Stabs her.]

SCENE IV. To them PALADORE

*Palad.* Sure 'twas the scream of woe—  
A woman struggling! villains, loose your hold!  
Dogs! hell-hounds! [He drives them out and returns.]

*Alinda.* [fainting.] Oh!

*Palad.* Guilt has the wings of wind,  
My fight can scarce o'ertake them. On the ground!  
I came too late to save her. Hearts of stone  
Might feel compunction sure, to mar a form  
So soft and fair as this. Thou beauteous marble,  
Forgive my tardy succour! here's a mould,  
So delicate, 'twere worth a miracle  
To give it second life. I've seen this face,—  
Ha! as I live, 'tis she; the beauteous girl  
That waited on the princess. Soft! the blood  
Steals to her cheek again, the azure lids  
Begin to open.

*Alind.* Oh!

*Palad.* Look up, sweet maid!

*Alind.* Bless me! where am I?

*Palad.* Safe from violence,  
Nor in a stranger's arms

*Alind.* Your voice is gentle.  
But will you save me from these barbarous men,  
Shou'd they again return? I tremble still,  
Still feel their ruffian gripe, nor can believe  
I yet am safe, tho' I no more behold them.

*Palad.*

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*Palad.* They are fled far: but, ah! thy side is  
pierc'd; Nor does this houseless solitude afford  
The chance of timely succour.

*Alind.* Heaven is just,  
(For now I know you) since it bids me die,  
Weeping for pardon at your injur'd knees;  
For I have basely wrong'd you.

*Palad.* Wrong'd me! how?  
All who have ever serv'd, or lov'd that false one,  
As they bring back her irksome memory,  
I shou'd avoid in wisdom. So confin'd,  
It is not in thy sphere to wake a thought,  
More than compassion for thy helpless sex,  
And aid my order binds to.

*Alind.* Have but patience,  
Nor waste the few short moments fate allows me  
To doubt my truth; the seal of death is on it.  
You left the court on much supposed proof  
Of her incontinence.

*Palad.* Supposed proof!  
By heaven! I saw her in the fulsome twine  
Of riotous dalliance with one she swore!  
That very noon, (a budding perjury)  
Excited but her loathing.

*Alind.* At her window  
I know you think you saw her.

*Palad.* Think I saw her!  
Is there for visible objects better sense  
Than sight to hold by?

*Alind.* Oh, most injur'd lady!  
My sullied lips wou'd but profane thy virtue  
To say I know it spotless.

*Palad.* Do not mock me  
With hopes impossible. I see her still—  
Her snowy veil and sparkling coronet,  
Peculiar in their form—

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*Alind.* By me were worn,  
While she and harmless thoughts slept sound together;  
Bireno's was the fraud; my boundless love  
Made me his instrument.

*Palad.* Oh, hold my brain!—  
But one thing more—how came he by that letter?  
Her picture, mine?

*Alind.* These too I found, and gave him,  
By her for you intended. 'Midst her notes  
I found his title writ, and trac'd the address  
Stroke after stroke agreeing.

*Palad.* Wretch! fond wretch!  
Have I for this with viperous calumny  
Traduc'd her virgin fame? with desperate hand  
Rais'd this sharp sword against my tortur'd breast?  
But I will turn an usurer in revenge,  
And take such bloody interest for my wrongs—

*Alind.* Let heaven be my avenger—how I lov'd him!  
Oh, savage! merciless! to snare my life,  
From mere suspicion my unwary tongue  
Might publish his contrivance—

*Palad.* How! thy life!  
Inhuman dog! were these his ruffians then,  
I found thee struggling with?

*Alind.* I thought they led me,  
By his especial care, far from the city,  
Where he ordain'd I shou'd remain secure  
To hide this swelling witness of my shame,  
My fatal passion bears him.

*Palad.* Heaven defend me!

*Alind.* There lies the bloody contract. Oh! forgive me!  
I have struggled hard to make this last confession:  
The icy grasp of death chills my shrunk heart.

*Palad.* Wou'd I cou'd save thee!

*Alind.* Say but you forgive me.

*Palad.* As I wou'd be forgiven, *Alind.*



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*Alind.* And will you plead  
My pardon with my ever gracious mistress  
When she shall know ?—'tis dark—let this atone. [*Dies.*  
*Palad.* Peace to thy hapless shade ! thou hast wash'd out  
Thy offences in thy blood.—Unnatural slave !  
Hell shou'd invent new torments for thy crimes,  
And howling fiends avoid thee. I have heard,  
Have read, bold fables of enormity,  
Devis'd to make men wonder, and confirm  
The abhorrence of our nature, but this hardness  
Transcends all fiction. Mover of the world !  
Send not thy sulphurous lightning forth to strike,  
Nor cleave the ground to gape and swallow him ;  
But, oh ! reserve him for the sharper pangs  
My vengeance meditates. Poor blasted flower !  
Which way shall I bestow thee ? it were cruel  
To leave thee thus to insult.—Hold, yon peasant  
May help to bear her hence. Shepherd, approach.

## SCENE V.

To PALADORE, a SHEPHERD.

Hast thou a habitation near this place ?

*Shep.* Fair sir, I have. There eastward turn your eyes ;  
The curling smoke above yon tufted trees  
Mounts from my cottage fire.

*Palad.* Then call for aid,  
And bear this body thither.

*Shep.* Mercy guard us !  
This is a piteous sight. What cou'd provoke  
A youth of such a sweet and comely outside,  
To act so sad a deed ?

*Palad.* You wrong me, swain ;  
She fell by ruffians. Pr'ythee call thy hinds,  
And for thy soul's sake do this courtesy.

*Shep.*

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*Shep.* Good fir, detain me not. I haste to the city,  
Where all our villagers flock to behold  
A most strange sight, and sad as it is strange;  
With their best speed, my old limbs will be late;  
The sun goes down apace.

*Palad.*                 Whatever the fight,  
Respite thy curiosity for gold.  
Take this, and give a covering to that corpse. [*Gives a purse.*  
I must away ; you shall hear further from me.      *[Exit.]*

S C E N E VI.

S H E P H E R D.

He had a hard heart, lady, struck thee down—  
I wou'd not for the herds that graze these hills  
Beyond my eye-shot, no, nor for the wealth  
Of all who throng the city, I or mine  
Shou'd answer for a sin like this at doom's day.]  
Oh, if thy father lives, what bitter tears  
Will this misdeed wring from his watery eyes!  
Thou shalt not want what I can do for thee.  
I'll make thy bed with leaves, and strew thee o'er  
With herbs and flowers, wild thyme and lavender,  
White lilies, and the prime of all our fields :  
And for thy soul's peace, till thy knell is toll'd,  
I'll number many an ave.—Come, for help.

To the SHEPHERD, RINALDO at an opposite entrance.

*Rinal.* Oh, cursed chance! vain is my search to find him;

Yet all his life to come, from one lost moment  
May take its mournful colour. Doom'd to die ;  
And he alike accus'd, leave her to perish !  
Most horrible !—kind shepherd ! answer quickly ;  
Saw'st thou a youth clad in a shining robe,  
Of noble port, wandering these tangled woods ?

*Shep.*

THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 49

*Shep.* Even such a one as you describe, but now,  
(Him of your question doubtless) went from hence,  
And left with me in charge—

*Rinald.* No matter what.  
Know you the path he took, which way his course?

*Shep.* I follow'd him a little with my eye,  
And saw him wind round yonder shrubby hill,  
Then pass the row of olives.

*Rinald.* Leads it not  
Strait to the city?

*Shep.* As the falcon flies.

*Rinald.* Oh, fortune! guide his steps once more to Pavia,  
Else, never ending misery awaits him.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT

50 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY

ACT V.

SCENE I. A Hall.

LUCIO, an OFFICER.

Offic. THINK on the danger.

Luc. Who sees only that,  
Will ne'er surmount it. More than life I owe her;  
Adversity's hard hand had crush'd my hopes,  
Doom'd my sweet wife and infant family,  
To shameful beggary: my affliction reach'd her;  
Can I forget her all-dispensing bounty,  
That rais'd my soul from comfortless despair,  
That bad my chearful house again receive me,  
Bless'd us with plenty?—if I fall, and save her.  
'Tis well; I ask no nobler epitaph.

Offic. There's virtue in your motive, and your purpose;  
But how effect her rescue?

Luc. Will you join us?

Offic. Or why these questions?

Luc. I dare trust your honour,  
The bond of soldiers. Know then, I command  
(And fought it with this hope) her prison guard:  
I have sound'd them, they hate the cruel service.  
A little, ere the fatal hour's approach,  
We mean to pass their unresisting force,  
Throw wide the iron gates, and bear her safe  
Beyond the danger of this bloody edict.

Offic. It looks success, may fortune second it!  
The throngs assembled to behold the fight,  
Will count for idle gazers, and conceal  
Your bold design, till 'tis too late to thwart it.  
How brooks she her sad plight?

Luc.



# THE LATE OF LOMBARDY. 51

*Luc.* With fortitude

So sweet, so even temper'd, that her death  
Seems but a phantom, dress'd by fancy's trick,  
To frighten children. All her soul's employ'd  
In ministr'ing with softest piety,  
To her distracted father.

*Offic.* There's a spectacle,  
Indeed heart-rending, cast on the cold ground,  
He strews his head with ashes, by the roots  
Tears out his silver hair, beats his poor breast;  
While the significant dumbness of his gesture,  
Beggars all power of words.

*Luc.* Thou blind mischance,  
Stand neuter! we shall cheat him presently.  
I'll to my station. Keep thy sword conceal'd,  
Nor sheath it drawn, but in the villain's breast,  
That dare oppose us. Be but firm, and fear not.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

## SCENE II.

BIRENO, *alone.*

By their description it was Paladore;  
The place, the glittering robe, his courage too,  
In so assailing them. If their keen daggers  
Left her enough of breath to tell the tale,  
She has, no doubt, told all, and wing'd him back,  
To wreak his vengeance on me; this way only,  
Can I be safe; firm as he is, and fearless,  
My ambush cuts him off; and, by his death,  
The full tide of my prosperous fortune flows,  
Never to ebb.

## SCENE III.

To BIRENO, ASCANIO.

Well, the great period comes:  
No champion meets my challenge?

*Ascan.*

## 52 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

*Ascan.*

No, not one.

Fear puts the livery of conscience on :  
 They cannot think one of your nobleness,  
 Wou'd charge a lady falsely to the death ;  
 And few are the examples of success  
 Against conviction : " true, 'tis pitiful,  
 " That one so fair, so young, of royal birth,  
 " For the meer frailty of impulsive nature,  
 " Should meet so sad a doom ; the law's to blame,  
 " That bloodily enrolls a venial trespass,  
 " With those o'ergrown and huge enormities,  
 " That shake society ;" but they can no more,  
 Than drop a tear or two, and let her die. [king

*Biren.* True ; she must die ; and the heart-wounded  
 Whose age already totters o'er the grave,  
 Like a crush'd serpent, but a little longer  
 Will drag his painful being. Yet one fear  
 Sits, like a boding raven o'er my breast,  
 And flaps its heavy wing to damp my joy.

*Ascan.* What fear can reach you now ? from Paladore ?

*Biren.* Perdition seize him ! yes, but my good ruffians  
 Ere this, I trust, have sent to his account,  
 That ill-star'd Briton. Doubly arm'd they wait him  
 Close by a brambled cavern he must pass,  
 Returning hither. Yet, should he escape——  
 It cannot be——heart, re-assume thy seat.  
 But, come, the time draws on——bear to the lists,  
 My martial ensigns ; I must seem prepar'd  
 To oppose a danger that will never meet me.

[*As he is going, a servant delivers a paper.*

The hand of Bernardine, my trusty spy. [Reads.

Confusion ! rescue her ! come back, Ascanio !  
 Fly to St. Mark's, collect the cohort there ;  
 Go, place them instantly around the prison ;  
 Bid them disarm the guard that holds that post,  
 And, on their lives, drive back the populace.  
 I'll to Honorias—these stout veterans

Will

THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 53

Will sweep the rabble like vile chaff before them.  
Away—a moment may be fatal to us. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE IV. *A Prison.*

PRINCESS, WOMEN *attending.*

*Princ.* Nay, dry these tears—the awful eve of death  
Is but profan'd by shews of common sorrow.

I have a triple armour round my heart,  
'Gainst all the shapes of terror; yet it owns  
The soft contagion of affection's drops,  
And melts at kindness. Come, this must not be—  
You, Laura! must be near me at the block,  
And help to disarray me.—What, more tears?  
Stop them, for shame; I must have strangers else,  
For this last office. When the axe has fallen,  
They have no further power—save from disgrace,  
My poor remains, and on your loves, I charge you,  
When I am dead, see, that they touch me not.  
I have not been unmindful of your service.  
It is not much—there were too many poor,  
Too many comfortless, to leave me rich:  
But you will find a father in the king,  
And, for my sake, he will be bounteous to you.  
Retire, and weep, I dare not look upon you.

[*Takes a picture from her breast.*]

Thou dear dumb image of a form belov'd!  
Soul of my soul, and precious even in death,  
A while be sensible I receive this sigh,  
And take my last farewell. When thou shalt know  
My truth, and sufferings, let not the sad tale  
Blast the fair promise of thy noble youth,  
But, with a sweet, and sacred melancholy,  
Embalm the soft remembrance of my love.

F

My

52 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

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THE LAW OF LOMBARDY, 53

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But, with a sweet, and sacred melancholy,  
Embalm the soft remembrance of my love.

F

My

54 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

My father! oh, angelic host support me,  
To bear this parting, and death's pang is past!

SCENE V.

PRINCESS, KING.

*Princ.* I am indeed subdued—to see thee thus!

*King.* They would not let me die—

*Princ.* These few short hours,

Alas, how have they chang'd thee! murderous sorrow!

Thy furrows sink more deep than age or time.

Your cheek is ashy pale, your eyes quite sunk.

Will you not look upon me?

*King.* Oh, no, no;

I came to give thee comfort, to sustain thee;

But, looking on thee, I shall weep again,

And add my load of misery to thine.

Yet teach me to be patient.

*Princ.* View me well;

Nor think these tears fall for my own distress;

The throbbings of my heart are for my father.

'Tis apprehension makes death terrible;

Cowards, from weakness, tremble; guilt, from con-  
science;

But the firm bosom innocence invests;

Knows it a fix'd inevitable end,

Meets the pale guest, nor startles at the encounter.

*King.* Thou wert my all, a mote that vex'd thy eye,

A thorn that raz'd thy finger, snatch'd my thoughts

From every care but thee. And thus to lose thee!

*Princ.* Oh, were our being circumscrib'd by earth,

This end indeed might shake my constancy:

But, faith apart: think what bright evidence

Shines here within of immortality.

Who has not felt the heavenly overflow

Of thought congenial to the eternal mind?

Why

Why are there tears of virtuous sympathy?  
 Whence that celestial fluid of the eye,  
 That sheds such full, such satisfied delight?  
 But that the God of all benevolence,  
 Thus gives a glimpse of blessedness to come,  
 In joys refin'd from sense, and far transcending?

*King.* What has old age to lose? is the poor remnant  
 Of life worn thread-bare, precious for itself?  
 Can we be fond of pain, and feebleness?  
 No; but our second spring, our soul's renew'd  
 In our dear children, there we cling to life;  
 Mortality! thy last, thy heaviest curse,  
 Bids us remain the mournful monument,  
 The living tomb of all our comforts buried,  
 Telling no more in our sepulchral sorrow,  
 Than that they were, and are not.

*Princ.* You must live  
 (For sure the hour will come) to see this cloud  
 Pass from my memory; and the shame he merits,  
 Fall on my base accuser.

*King.* [*Kneeling.*] Hear me, heaven!  
 On the devoted murderer of my child,  
 With tenfold visitation pour my sorrow!  
 Let fear, mistrust, and horror ever haunt him!  
 Slumber forsake his couch, and joy his table!  
 If he must reign, oh, line his crown with thorns!  
 Turn reverence to contempt, the friend he trusts,  
 Meet him for smiles with daggers: war abroad,  
 Treason at home, pursue, and harass him!  
 And may the steam, that mounts from innocent blood,  
 Make heavier the dire thunderbolt,  
 Lanc'd from thy red right arm, at last to crush him!

*Princ.* Spirit of peace! on his distemper'd rage,  
 Oh, shed thy healing balm! [*A noise without.*]

What mean these shouts?  
 This wild tumultuous noise?

56 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

To them an ATTENDANT.

*Attend.* Our prayers are heard:  
The guard gives way, the massy bars are forc'd;  
And, like delivering angels, the rous'd people,  
Burst in to lead you from this den of horror.

*King.* Oh, joy unhop'd! millions of blessings crown  
them;

*Attend.* Led by the gallant Lucio, they advance.

*King.* The tiger then may seek his prey in vain;  
My brave, my generous people! hark! they come.

[*More noise.*]

*Princ.* Ah, fit! retire—your heart must thank their  
purpose;

Yet sure 'twere most unmeet for royalty,  
Whose sway, and throne, are hallow'd in obedience,  
To countenance this outrage. Pray, retire.

*King.* Yes, I will go; but, oh, be swift, my child!  
Nor dally with this blessed chance to save thee. [*Exit.*]

SCENE VI.

To her LUCIO, his sword drawn.

*Princ.* [*Advancing.*] Your purpose, quickly?

*Luc.* [*Kneeling.*] Your deliverance, lady!

I owe a debt of boundless gratitude,  
And thus in part wou'd pay it. Madam, fly!  
The people all are yours, a chosen band,  
Faithful, and brave, wait to conduct you hence:  
This smiling moment seiz'd, may place you safe,  
Beyond the dreadful fate that threatens you.

*Princ.* But not beyond the reach of foul disgrace,  
The noble mind's worst fate—I know thee, Lucio!  
And thank thy kind intention. Cou'd my flight  
Restore my name to its original whiteness,  
Make palpable his lie who slanders me,



# THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 57

I'd think thee thus commission'd from above,  
And welcome life with transport.

*Luc.*

Do I wake!

When your good angel thus by me invites you,  
Is this a time to doubt? can you devote  
That rosy youth, that all commanding beauty,  
To voluntary death?

*Princ.*

Were it a pain,

Worse than the fear of cowards can conceive,  
I wou'd abide it. Have I not endur'd  
A greater horror, heard myself proclaim'd,  
The thing I scorn to utter? shall I live,  
To bear about a disputable fame,  
Scattering the eternal seeds of strife and war,  
Over my country, for the privilege  
To draw a little transitory breath,  
And be consign'd to infamy, or honour,  
But as the sword of conquest arbitrates?

*Luc.* These are suggestions of your generous anger,  
And not your reason—oh, most honour'd lady!

Again behold me prostrate at your feet:

Thus, thus, by me the people supplicate. [*Kneels.*

We have but one short moment left to save you;

Seize it, and live, live to be still rever'd

Your country's pride, her boast, her ornament.

*Princ.* I am not to be chang'd. But, oh, my father!  
The good old king, he wants a friend like thee.

*Asc. [Without.]* Force down the bridge. Kill all  
who dare oppose.

They fly; stand fast—

*Princ.*

He cuts my purpose short.

## SCENE VII.

ASCANIO, with Soldiers to them.

*Luc.* Oh, death to all our hopes! 'tis now too late.  
I cast thee from my hand, vile instrument!  
Since she disdains thy service. [*Throws down his sword.*  
*Asc.* Seize that traitor—  
Quick, bear him hence—madam, I grieve to speak it,  
The herald, to the temple porch, has issued  
For final proclamation.

*Princ.* Spare your sorrow—  
A shameful world, disgrac'd by souls like thine,  
Turns grief to joy, when noble natures leave it.  
[*Exit Princess guarded.*

## SCENE VIII.

To ASCANIO, BIRENO.

*Biren.* Oh, let me clasp thee! this was worthy  
service.  
But for thy zeal, the high-rais'd edifice  
So near complete, had tumbled to the earth,  
And crush'd me in its fall.  
*Asc.* Haste to the lists;  
A moment more consummates our design,  
And fate itself may strive in vain to shake us.  
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

## SCENE IX.

*The Lifts in the middle of the stage. A scaffold, guard, and executioner at the bottom. Many spectators, officers, and senators, preceding the Princess, supported by women. Bireno with Ascanio, who bears his shield and sword. Herald, with trumpets, on the sides.*

*Offic.* Make room. Fall back. Let the procession pass.

*Biren.* 'Tis known why I stand here; yet once again,  
And for the last time, herald, sound my challenge.  
Proceed, none answer. [*Bireno's trumpet sounds.*]

*Princ.* I wou'd have it so.  
You generous people, who behold with horror  
These gloomy preparations, do not deem me  
Cold, and unthankful, for my offer'd safety,  
Tho' I prefer'd this dire alternative.  
Before the tongue of slander struck my fame,  
The rude hand of affliction never touch'd me;  
Life had a thousand bonds to tie me to it,  
Young spirits, royal birth, fortune, and greatness:  
But honour was the prop, round which, like stalks  
Tender and weak, these accessaries twin'd;  
When calumny's sharp edge cut down that trunk,  
Then these poor tendrils lost their hue, and wither'd.  
With that great ruin fell my happiness.  
I now stand on eternity's dark verge,  
Nor dare I to the God, and judge of truth,  
Bring lips with falsehood sullied. Of the offence  
Cast on me by vile malice, I am free,  
Even to the abhorrence; this to Heaven is known,  
My own heart, and my accuser: therefore boldly,  
And for your sakes, will I arraign the law,  
Which thus has pass'd upon me.

FIRST

## 60 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

*First Sen.*

Gracious lady!

If in this censure we too stand accus'd,  
Think we pronounc'd, but did not make the law.  
And let my bleeding heart bear witness for me;  
I wou'd lay down the dearest thing I own,  
To save you from the forfeit.

*Princ.*

Good, my lord!

All forms of justice have been well observ'd;  
My blame lights on the law, not on your office,  
Which you with truth and mercy minister.  
But let these mute spectators mark my counsel:  
Fall at the king's feet, clasp the senate's knees,  
And pray them, they wipe out clear from their rolls,  
This more than cruel edict; else, be sure  
From every roof there hangs a dangerous sword,  
(Hangs by a thread) which each dark hand may drop  
To pierce and sever nature's dearest ties.  
She who profanes her honor's sanctity,  
Upbraided by her heart, by her own sex  
Shun'd or neglected, nay, held cheap, and vile;  
Even to the loathing of the lover's sense,  
Who wrought her easy nature to transgress;  
These are sharp penalties; but added death  
Turns the clear stream of justice into blood,  
And makes such law more curs'd than anarchy.  
Forget not my example; let me perish:  
But if you pluck your safety from my ruin,  
I shall not die in vain. Farewel—lead on—

[*Princel goes toward the scaffold, a trumpet sounds.*]

*First Sen.* Hold, on your lives.

*Biren.* What means that trumpet's voice?

It sounds a shrill alarm.

SCENE



THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 61

SCENE X. *To them* a SQUIRE.

SQUIRE.

Arrest your sentence.

I come in the name of one, who hears with horror  
This barbarous process, to proclaim the accuser  
Of that most innocent and royal lady,  
A slanderer and villain; who accepts  
Her just defence, and by the law of arms  
Throws down this gage, and claims the combat for her.

*Biren.* Take it, Ascanio. Bid your knight appear,  
(If such his order) for to none beneath  
Am I thus bound to answer. Speak his titles.

*Squire.* He wills not I reveal him; but suffice it,  
He has a name in arms that will not shame  
The noble cause he fights for.

*Biren.* Bid him enter.  
My shield and sword. Say, I am deck'd to meet him.

[*Exit Squire.*]

Some rash adventurer, prodigal of life,  
Brib'd by her father's gold to grace her fall,  
And add an easy trophy to my banners.—  
Confusion! Paladore!

SCENE XI. *To them* PALADORE.

PRINCESS.

'Tis he, 'tis he!—  
Then, life, thou art welcome.—

[*A loud murmur among the people.*]

*Biren.* Marshal, do your office!  
Furies and hell!—keep order in the lists!—  
Silence that uproar.—

*Palad.* Yes, behold me, villain!  
I have thee in the toils; thou can'st not 'scape me.—  
But oh! most wrong'd, and heavenly excellence!  
[*To the Princess.*]

How shall I plead for pardon?—can the abuse  
Of his deep craft, and devilish artifice,

Fooling

62 THE LAW OF LOMBARDY.

Fooled my nature's plainness, blanch my cheek  
From the deep shame that my too easy faith  
Combin'd with hell against thee?

*Princ.* Rise, my soldier !  
Though yet I know not by what subtle practice  
Thy nobleness was wrought on, nor the means  
That since reveal'd his fraud, praise be to heaven !  
Thy presence plucks my honour from the grave ;  
Thou liv'st, thou know'st my truth, thou wilt avenge me.

*Palad.* Avenge thee !—yes—did his right hand grasp  
thunder,

Did yelling furies combat on his side,  
(Pal'd in with circling fires) I wou'd assail him,  
Nor cast a look to fortune for the event.

*Biren.* Presumptuous Briton ! think not that bold mien,  
A wanton's favour, or thy threats, have power  
To shrink the sinews of a soldier's arm.

*Palad.* A soldier's arm ! thou double murderer !  
Assassin in thy intention, and in act.  
But ere my faulchion cleave thy treacherous breast  
I will divulge thee.—Bring that ruffian forth,—

[*One of Alinda's murderers is brought out.*]

Two hell-hounds, such as this, he set upon me ;  
One fell beneath my sword ; that wretch I spar'd,  
Kneeling for mercy : let your justice doom him.  
Look you amaz'd ! peruse that paper, lords,  
His compact for the blood of a fair minion,  
He taught to sin, and made her wages death.—  
Ha ! does it shake thee ? see Alinda's form,  
Thy panting image mangled in her side,  
Stalks from her sanguine bed, and ghastly smiles,  
To aid the prowess of this dauntless soldier.

*Biren.* [*aside*] Destruction ! all's reveal'd !—

*Ascan.* to *Biren.* What, turn'd to stone !  
Droop not, for shame.—Be quick, retort the charge.

*Biren.*

THE LAW OF LOMBARDY. 63

*Biren.* All false as hell! and thou—defend thyself;  
Nor blast me thus with thy detested presence.—

This to thy heart. [*Fight. Bireno falls.*]

*Palad.* Oh, impotence of guilt!

An infant's lath hath sell'd him. Villain, die!

And know thy shame, and the deep wound that wriths  
thee,

Are but a feeble earnest of the pangs  
Reserv'd beneath for giant-crimes like thine.

*Princ.* Haste to the king, proclaim this bless'd event!

*Biren.* Perfidious chance! caught in my own device!—  
Accursed!—ha! they drag me! tear me!—oh!— [*Exit.*]

*Princ.* I have a thousand things to ask, to hear:  
But, oh! the joy to see thee thus again,  
To owe my life, my honour, to thy love—  
These tears, these rapturous tears, let them speak for me.

*Palad.* I cou'd endure the malice of my fate:  
But this full tide of such excessive bliss,  
Sure 'tis illusion all! it quite transports me.  
When I have borne thee from this scene of horror,  
Perhaps I may grow calm, and talk with reason.

SCENE XII. *and last.*

To them, KING, LUCIO, &c.

*King.* Where is she? let me strain her to my heart.—  
They cannot part us now, my joy! my comfort!—  
Thou generous youth! how can my o'erflowing soul  
Find words to thank thee?—words! poor recompence!  
Here I invest thee with the forfeit lands,  
The wealth and honours of that prostrate traitor.  
This too is little—then receive her hand,  
Due to thy love, thy courage, and thy virtue,  
And joys unutterable crown your union.

T H E E N D.

## EPILOGUE to the LAW of LOMBARDY.

Written by the AUTHOR.

Spoken by Miss YOUNGE.

O F all the Gothic laws I ever heard  
This Lombard Law was sure the most absurd :  
What ! could the monsters mean to make us die,  
But for a little harmless gallantry ?  
Were such a barbarous custom now in fashion,  
Good Lord ! it would unpeople half the nation.  
Scaffolds on scaffolds now the streets would fill,  
As sign-posts did, before the paving-bill.  
Were British law-makers such rigorous churls,  
They'd hardly leave a head to wear false curls.  
Besides, what champion now would risque his life,  
To gain what most men shudder at— a wife.  
Instead of armed knights at trumpet's summons,  
Commend me to our proctors, and the Commons.  
There, though we lose our husbands, and our fame,  
We get our portion, and a maiden name.  
And if her fortune, and her charms remain,  
Then Miss may wed—and be divorc'd again.  
Yet, though these frolics have of late been common,  
Lay not the blame entirely on weak woman.  
The careless mate his rival recommends,  
We find him 'midst his own obliging friends.  
Some swain, who swears he lives but in our eyes,  
And plies us with such cunning flatteries,  
That spouse neglecting us, and lover wooing,  
One drives, and t'other leads us, to our ruin.  
So, if weak ladies chanceto go astray,  
Their lords, methinks, are more in fault than they :  
The goal of marriage reach'd, the men lie down,  
Like weary racers when the prize is won :  
Mere catching us alone their care engages ;  
The nets they spread, but never mind the cages.  
The married gamester more delight can find,  
In " Seven's the main," than all dear womankind.  
Asteon wedded, to our voice prefers  
The sweeter music of his yelping curs ;  
While the dull sot, who his fix bottles boasts,  
Thinks women good for nothing—but for toasts.  
Thus slighted for the glass, the hound, the die,  
Our pride steps in, and to revenge we fly ;  
One obvious method only can preserve us,  
Strive, by your own attentions, to deserve us ;  
And now, as formerly, be sure you'll prove,  
Contempt will meet contempt, as love meets love.